

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name: CAMERON CITY POOL - PWA PROJECT 1196

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: Park Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Cameron

vicinity: N/A

state: WV county: Marshall code: 051 zip code: 26033

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-Local

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related property listing: N/A

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4. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this

☒ nomination

☐ request for determination of eligibility

meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property

☒ meets

☐ does not meet

the National Register Criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

William G. [Signature]
Signature of Certifying Official

5/25/93
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property

☐ meets

☐ does not meet

the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

=====

5. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the

National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the

National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

=====

6. Function or Use

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Historic: Recreation & Culture Sub: Swimming Pool & Bathhouse

Current : Recreation & Culture Sub: Swimming Pool & Bathhouse

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification:

Other Description: No style

Materials: foundation Concrete roof Asphalt

walls Wood other Concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

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8. Statement of Significance

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Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: State.

Applicable National Register Criteria: A & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) : N/A

Areas of Significance: Entertainment/Recreation

Politics/Government

Engineering

Period(s) of Significance: 1939

Significant Dates : 1939

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Hunter, Frank

State significance of property, and justify criteria, considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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See continuation sheet. X

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State historic preservation office

Other state agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other -- Specify Repository:

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10. Geographical Data
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Acreage of Property: Approximately 2 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

17 537680 4408050

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

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11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Katherine M. Jourdan, Director Northern Regional Office

Organization: WV SHPO Date: 26 March 1993

Street & Number: 1528 Market Street Telephone: (304) 238-1300

City or Town Wheeling State: WV Zip: 26003

=====
Property Owner

Name: City of Cameron, ATTN: Hon. Gary Wright, Mayor

Street & Number: 44 Main Street Telephone: (304) 686-2366

City or Town: Cameron State: WV Zip: 26033

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CAMERON CITY POOL - PWA PROJECT 1196, CAMERON, WEST VIRGINIA, MARSHALL CO.

The Cameron City Pool is a unique structure built during the Depression Era with a grant from the Project Works Administration in 1939. The semi-circular pool with underwater life guard station, and wooden bath house is located in a valley in the midst of the city of Cameron.

The pool and bath house lie in a natural valley with a line of houses on the hillside to the east, on North Street, and a hillside to the west along Park Avenue. The bath house, which is centered, has a stone wall to the west and a earth ramp with drive to the east which fill-in the end of the valley. A dirt and gravel parking lot is to the south of the bath house, with the pool to the north. A few stone slabs act as stepping stones for a walkway to the bath house and across the front, west of the bath house, where stone steps and a metal railing wind up to the pool level. A high chain link fence runs along the top of the level on both sides.

BATH HOUSE: Visible from the south or front facade the bath house has two levels with the filtration system on the lower level accessible from a projecting wooden addition (1989) with a entrance on the west side and a window to the east. The lower level is concrete with four courses of concrete block above the second level sill line topped by lapped and beveled wood siding. A concrete staircase with a wood railing reaches the single front door, with four lights above the three lower panels, on the second level. A metal fencing has been added inside the wooden railing on the stair landing as precaution for the saftey of small children. The hip asphalt shingle roof has a center hipped cupola with wood siding and vents. The eaves of the house are narrow box car siding. A metal turban vent is to the west. To the east side of the second level is a shed roofed concrete block addition.

On the lower level at the end of the stairs are two metal plaques, one above the other with block lettering. (The slash marks indicate when a line ends.) The top plaque reads: "CAMERON SWIMMING POOL/FEDERAL EMERGENCY ADM/OF PUBLIC WORKS/PROJECT NO. 1196" The bottom plaque reads: "ERECTED 1939/A.N. COOK - MAYOR/MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL/F.L.PURDY MELVIN CLARK/W.H. MARLING C.H. KNIGHT/D.R. HENDERSON I.N. MICKEY/CHAUNCEY D. HINERMAN/CITY ATTORNEY/ E.W. HOWELL/CITY CLERK/GORDON SAMMONS ENGINEER/H.L. SEABRIGHT CO. CONTRACTOR".

The rear or north facade has the two rear exit doors from the changing rooms. A large clock is mounted to the northwest wall. The addition for the concession stand is on the east end of the building with a large opening with folding wooden panel for a serving area. Two entrance door are on the east facade with three lights and two lower panels. The west facade has no openings.

The bath house door opens into a check-in lobby with a wooden counter across the space with beaded board on the sides and wide planks as the top

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counter. An old National Cash Register is in the center with the counter cut out in a curve for someone to sit behind. There are wooden gates at the ends of the counter mounted to the wall to limit access. Against the back wall are plank shelves with multiple wire rectangular baskets for possessions. A wooden storage cabinet is on the wall to the left with a beaded board door. The wooden rafters are visible on the ceiling. The side walls to this area are beaded board and do not go all the way to the roof but are about 10 feet high. The ladies changing room is to the right and the men's is to the left. The outside walls in the changing rooms have visible wall studs.

The ladies side has three rows of beaded wood partitions for changing areas with a wooden seat and fabric curtains. (See sketch of floor/site plan). The changing room leads into the four stalls for restrooms and the shower area has four concrete divisions for showers. A wood partition then leads to the rear exit door. The men's changing room is open with four wooden double benches with a rack with hooks down the center. These appear to be original fixtures. The shower area is open with two stalls for restrooms and a urinal. The rear exit is identical to the ladies side with a five panel rear door and a concrete ramp to the terrace area.

There is a flat concrete and grassed terrace area for about 15 feet beyond the facade of the bath house. On the east side of the lot is a open metal pole structure with corrugated metal roof as a picnic shelter. There is a tree nearby as well as a pine tree at the northwest corner of the bath house.

The pool is a semi-circle with a flat straight edge against the rock face wall on the west side of the lot. This flat edge is 150 feet long, and the radius of the semi-circular rim is 75 feet. The sides of the pool gently slope down to the center of the flat edge which is 8 1/2 feet at its deepest point. Along the edge of the curved rim are twelve red ornamental metal posts with metal flower urns on top. The ornamentation has scallops and fish heads and from their mouths water jets supply a balanced flow of recirculated water. Along the flat edge of the pool is a centered projecting semi-circular curve into the pool for the life guards and two low diving boards. There is a fenced area in the pool approximately 12 feet from the boards to separate the experienced and nonexperienced swimmers. This fence which has been changed to chain link is at the depth of 4 feet on the sloping sides.

The diving area has been changed with the high boards removed in 1992 for safety reasons. The life guard chair used to be mounted on a pole centered in this curved area underneath a stepped umbrella. Flood lights were mounted further up this center pole. Steps lead from the south side of this curved area of the pool into a submarine like room under the diving board area. This curved concrete room has a center metal pole support and five glass and plexi-glass portholes which provide a view into

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the pool. The designed function of this room was as an underwater life guard station. Lights from this room provided night time illumination in the pool. Unfortunately one of the portholes was damaged from too high a lamp wattage and has cracked causing a water leakage. Several of the other portholes have also needed repairs.

The above ground life guard chairs are now to each side of the diving area and fiberglass slides are mounted to enter the pool outside the diving area. These slides have also been replaced and were originally mounted along the curved rim of the pool to enter the deeper area against the flat rim, opposite from today. Opposite the diving area on the outside curved rim is a rectangular area projecting into the pool which is fenced on three sides. When the pool is filled this provides a depth of less than one foot for a baby pool.

Outside the semi-circular rim of the pool is a depression reflecting the same shape. This was once filled with white sand from Lake Michigan as a beach area. The sand had to be moved after a few seasons because when the water in the pool was recirculated the sand abraded the pipes of the filtration system.

There is a low concrete retaining wall along the east side of the lot outside the beach area and circling around the north side of the pool. On the north side of the pool is a grassy area leading to a fenced area with swingsets. There are a number of pine trees in the valley to the north and west of this playground area and along the west ridge of the pool. The houses to the east have their backyards looking and sloping down to the pool.

The Cameron City Pool had some progressive ideas about water safety when it was designed, especially with the underwater life guard station. The semi-circular design is unique and the sloping rim leads one gradually in and out of the water without a sharp drop off or the use of ladders. The pool is unique to West Virginia and its Northern Panhandle.

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The Cameron City Pool is being nominated under Criterion A for its relationship with Politics and Government as a Public Works Administration (PWA) project during the Depression years of the 1930s and with Recreation. It is also significant under Criterion C for Engineering with its unique semi-circular design and under water life guard room. The Period of Significance is 1939 when the project was part of the New Deal program.

Particularly hard hit by the Depression were the construction trades and related industries. To stimulate recovery, Congress in June 1933 created a Public Works Administration (PWA), which was authorized to disburse money to both federal and nonfederal agencies for construction projects of public benefit. State and local applicants could seek grants of up to 45 percent and loans of up to 70 percent of project cost; federal agencies could apply for grants of up to 100 percent. Although the PWA required that certain standards of design and construction be met before a project was given approval, attention to specifically architectural review was cursory.

President Roosevelt chose Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to head the new agency. Ickes spent money so carefully that his agency never fulfilled its promise as a pump-priming device, but the impact of PWA on public works building was considerable, especially in retarding physical deterioration in cities where employment needs were most pressing.

The idea for the Cameron City Pool was conceived after a fire destroyed the G.C. Murphy 5 & 10 store on Main Street in January of 1938. At that time it was recognized that the water supply and 180,000 gallon reservoir were limited. Thus the pool was to be used not only for recreation but an emergency fire protection reservoir of 235,000 gallons. A special three year levy was voted on by the residents to provide the city's share of the costs and PWA made up the remainder 55% of the grant. Approximately \$14,000 in bonds were issued and the total cost of the project was \$25,000.

The swimming pool was built from a design patented by a Indianapolis architect, Frank Hunter. It was the first to be built and was constructed by Better Swimming Pools Inc., also of Indianapolis, with local engineer Gordon Sammons of Moundsville, WV, and H.L. Seabright, contractor. The pool is semi-circular in design being 150 feet at its widest point and having a 75 foot radius. The pool slopes from the circular rim to 8 1/2 feet at its center point. There where the pool was deepest were diving boards at different levels projecting into the pool from a semi-circular point. The high boards were removed in 1992 for safety reasons but there are currently two low boards. The diving area is fenced for experienced swimmers with the depth outside the fence being four feet. At this same center point are the lifeguard chairs as well as a underground room with a curved front. This room has five portholes which provide a underwater view for a lifeguard station and creates a submarine-like chamber. The

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original life guard chair has been removed. It was mounted on a pole under a unusual stepped pagoda like shade umbrella. Approximately 20 feet further up the pool were lights for night time swimming. Additional lighting came from the submarine chamber, traditionally being multi-colored. A rectangular area projects into the pool opposite the diving area and is fenced in on three sides. When the pool is full, its depth is less than one foot and acts as a baby pool. There were two low slides near the shallow curved rim. These have been moved to the long flat rim of the pool.

On the outside rim of the pool are twelve ornamental metal posts with metal flower urns on tip. These posts conceal the water supply jets which provide an even flow of water into the pool. Outside the pool rim is a semi-circular depression with a concrete form. This was filled with white sand from Lake Michigan to provide a 20 foot beach. After only a few seasons the sand was removed. Since the water in the pool was constantly recirculated through three filtration tanks, the sand got into the system acting like sandpaper in the pipes. This proved destructive to the system.

The pool was built in a natural depression or valley with steep banks rising on three sides. The bath house and walls of earth to each side effectively sealed the end of the valley. The bath house was south of the pool and has two levels. The lower level holds the filtration system for the pool. The upper level has a central check-in with wire baskets for bathers use. To each side are changing rooms for men and women and two rear doors exit to the pool area. A concrete block addition has been made to the east side for a concession area.

Construction on the pool and bath house took place in the early spring of 1939. There was a rumor of a gold strike during the digging for the pool, however, it turned out to be pyrite or fools gold. The swimming pool opened on May 27, 1939, with construction being finished only one week before. The dedication was held on Memorial Day, May 30th with Mayor Arch Cook as Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon program. Congressman A.C. "Andy" Schiffer delivered the dedication address.

The Cameron pool and bath house have undergone few physical changes over the years. Most of these alterations were to improve the operations of the pool as the equipment needed to be replaced, such as the filtration system and water pipes. There have been changes to the diving area and life guard chairs which have been moved and replaced. The sand was removed due to problems with the filtration system. The bath house has had a shed addition for a concession stand attached on the east side.

The Cameron City Pool was a unique blend of a recreational facility with a potential fire fighting emergency water reserve. A project which reflected the improvements supported by the PWA program. For a rural town

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like Cameron, located in the hills of West Virginia, it also brought a sense of well being. Cameron had experienced a devastating fire in 1894 which burned for three days and consumed nearly 60 homes and businesses including much of the downtown. When neighboring towns sent rescue teams and equipment by railroad there was a major train derailment which delayed relief. The unusual semi-circular design sets the Cameron pool apart from the commonly recognized rectangular swimming facilities. The unique under water life guard station and beach area were also special features. The Cameron City Pool is an excellent example of a innovative engineering idea carried into creation.

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Newspapers:

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May 29, 1939.

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CAMERON CITY POOL - PWA PROJECT 1196, CAMERON, WEST VIRGINIA, MARSHALL CO.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Starting from the east corner of Park Street and Main Street and running north along the east side of Park Street for 325 ft to a beginning point; thence east 35.5 ft to a point; thence north 35 ft to a point; thence east again 64.7 ft to a point; thence north jogging along the rear of the lots facing the west side of North Street approximately 421 ft to a point; thence west to the east edge of Park Street, including the playground area; thence south along the east edge of Park Street to the place of beginning, containing approximately 2 acres.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the Cameron City Pool.

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Photo Information

CAMERON CITY POOL - PWA PROJECT 1196, CAMERON, WEST VIRGINIA, MARSHALL CO.

ADDRESS: Cameron City Pool
Park Street
Cameron, West Virginia
Marshall County

PHOTOGRAPHER: Katherine M. Jourdan

DATE OF PHOTOS: 25 March 1993

NEGATIVE LOCATION: Northern Regional Office
WV SHPO
1528 Market Street
Wheeling, WV 26003

- PHOTO 1 OF 7 View of South (Front) facade of Bath house
Camera looking North
- PHOTO 2 OF 7 View of East (L) and North (R) facade of Bath house
Camera looking southwest
- PHOTO 3 OF 7 View of swimming pool from north side
Camera looking south
- PHOTO 4 OF 7 View of baby pool on east curved rim of pool
Camera looking southwest
- PHOTO 5 OF 7 View of metal post and flower urn for water supply jets
Camera looking north
- PHOTO 6 OF 7 Dim view of under water life guard station
Camera looking northeast
- PHOTO 7 OF 7 View of metal picnic shelter (noncontributing)
Camera looking northeast

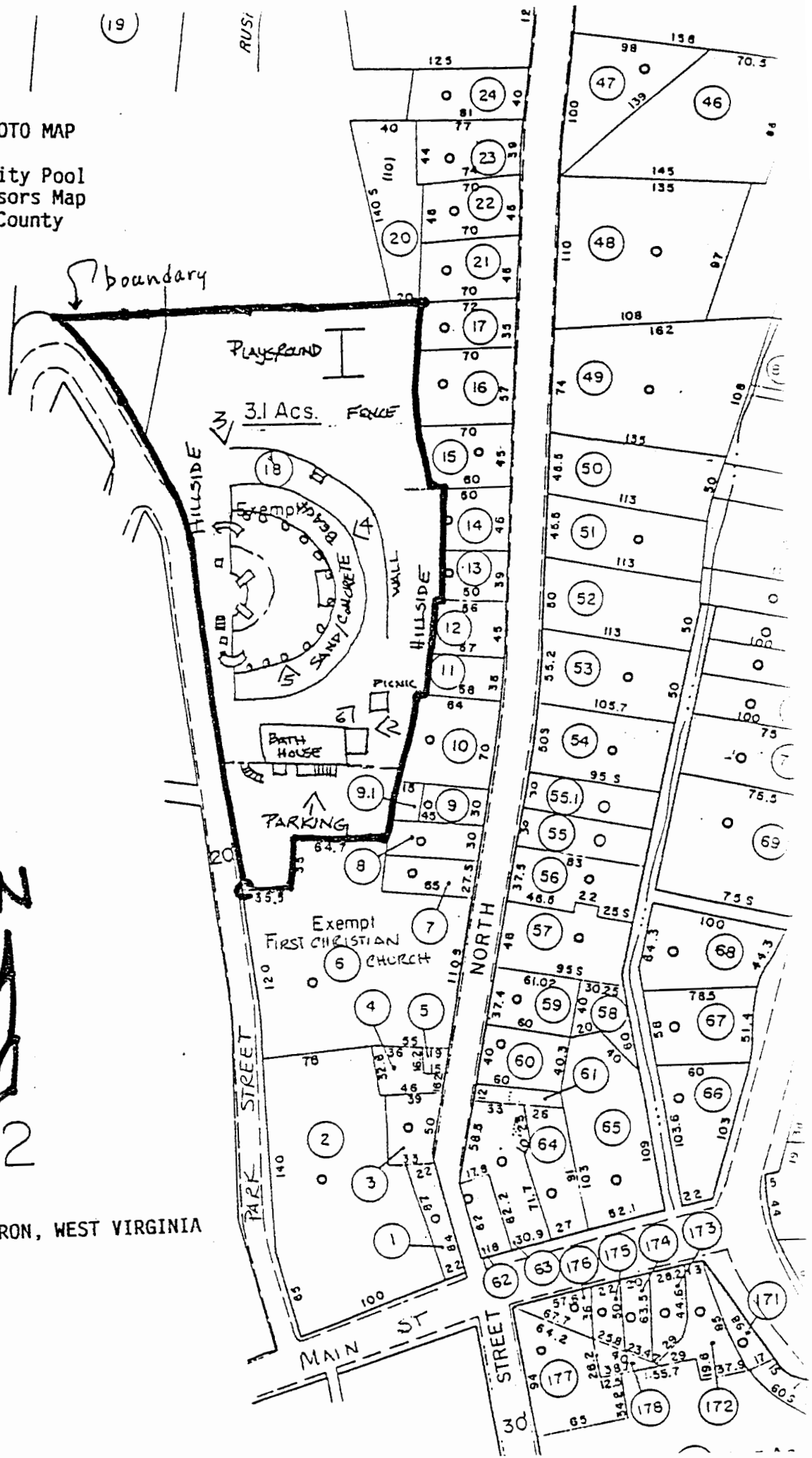
SKETCH/PHOTO MAP

Cameron City Pool
Tax Assessors Map
Marshall County

3 = PHOTO NO.'S

02-2

CAMERON, WEST VIRGINIA



CAMERON CITY POOL
Park Avenue
Cameron, West Virginia
Marshall County

BATH HOUSE
FLOOR PLAN - SECOND LEVEL
Drawing Not To Scale

